

Leadership Report
Senior Minister
Rev. Dr. Nathan C. Brown

Gratitude. I've never opened up a leadership meeting report with that word. Perhaps I should more often. After all, there is always a great deal for which to be grateful, but especially this year. Which might sound strange at first. However, I suspect if you were to spend some time thinking about it, despite the hardships of this last year, you would find more for which to be grateful than ungrateful. Or at least that was my experience this last week during some morning meditative time.

I am grateful for my family and their overall health and well-being. I'm grateful for the time I've had with my children and wife in 2020. I'm grateful for SSCC and all that we have managed to endure together. I'm grateful for the SSCC volunteers and staff, for the time and energy they have been expended in doing ministry in new ways. I'm grateful for the time I've had outside in creation this year, and my greater appreciation for it. I'm grateful for food, shelter and safety, which many currently do not have. I'm grateful for a God that has been with us every step of the way, no matter how difficult things may have become.

It's been a long, tough year. Between the flood, pandemic, political division and overall social unrest, it's been hard on us all. And yet, I choose to be thankful – thankful for my role as the Pastor of SSCC and for a church that has been flexible, creative and adaptable enough to not only survive this time, but to find ways even to thrive. I'm grateful, to each of you on the Leadership team, who have made that possible.

So, in that spirit, my report is a little bit different this month. I'm going to spend a moment thanking each of you for just a small portion of what you are doing right now. I can't possibly do justice to a summation of each of your contributions over the last year. In order to highlight ministry that is ongoing, I want to thank each of you for at least one way in which you are making Christ's light shine in the darkness.

As we close out this year, and look forward to celebrating Advent differently, with special music during worship on Sunday mornings, along with a Blue Christmas Service and a very different, but beautiful Christmas Eve Candlelight service, I want to thank Leslie and the WAE team for making Advent special this year, despite the challenges. I want to especially thank her for making livestreaming possible at SSCC – it gets better and better, each and every week, and would not be possible without her.

I want to thank Jenna and the outreach team, who have done a great job this holiday season coordinating several missions to make sure that Christmas happens for families in our community and that people don't go hungry this holiday season. These efforts also allowed congregants to be able to feel the generous spirit of this season and be connected to our ministry in a very tangible way.

Care and Connect helped coordinate a wonderful Santa event for our kids, making it special for each and every one of them, despite not seeing Santa in person. Janis Hill showed up on my doorstep with two bags for our kids, to give them some goodies to share with their friends during the Santa event. Thank you for making Santa a possibility for so many of our children this year!

I want to thank Elizabeth Peterson and the Elders and Deacons for their tireless efforts of making possible a safe worship experience on Sunday mornings. Elizabeth has been present each Sunday, making sure safety protocols are in place, ensuring enough ushers/volunteers are present, etc. Her efforts have made possible in-person worship on Sunday mornings.

A huge thank you to Jay Donnelly who is constantly addressing something related to our church building, most recently a heating issue in our sanctuary. Jay is always in contact with Amy, contractors and the other trustees about maintaining our facility and making sure it is safe and functional for our ministry.

Thank you to Janet Howell, who has spent hours with Cathy Cortright, Owen Janeway, Amy Frost and Kathryn Hartman converting our ministry platform from Church Windows to Breeze. The time and effort that has been given to the research, education, and now implementation is substantial. We are looking forward to the congregation utilizing this new platform in the New Year.

Josh Jones continues to bring fresh eyes to our financials, as he has worked with the finance team on the SSCC/TDS financials, and all of the complexities that have come with those in the last year. Josh agreed to the position in a pre-COVID world. The financials of the church between the flood and COVID have been an ongoing burden to manage. Josh has done so with a calm, reassuring demeanor that has kept us all at ease, amidst an anxious time.

Finally, I cannot thank John Mills enough for the hours and hours he continues to put in, navigating the congregation through extraordinary times. His work behind the scenes attending meetings, putting out fires and making impossible decisions are just a few examples of the time and energy he expends for the betterment of SSCC. He continues to manage a very stressful time with reassurance and a positive attitude. Thank you, John.

The right people were in the right positions this last year to move us through 2020. God knew what God was doing, calling each of you to your respective roles. Thank you for saying “yes” and sticking it out during a time in which it would have been easy to walk away. I am forever grateful to each and every one of you. Proud to be your Pastor.

Peace,
Nathan